

MINUTES OF MEETING OF INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON IGY

25 June 1958

PRESENT:

Major William J. Best, ATIC

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Mr. Robert Collins, ICD, State

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1. [REDACTED] circulated a draft paper outlining the views of the Working Group with respect to the export of Baker-Nunn satellite tracking cameras to the Soviet Union. He pointed out that the situation with respect to the suggested sale of these cameras had become complicated. Apparently the Department of Commerce Advisory Committee on Export Policy had been unable to reach a decision with respect to an export license. Also the U.S. National Committee for the IGY had proposed that a camera be taken to Moscow and set up there for the CSAGI meeting after which it would be given to the Soviets as a gift. The views of the Working Group should therefore, encompass the possibilities of both sale or gift of the cameras to the Soviets. After discussion, the Working Group agreed on the following statement of its views:

a. Information which has been made available to the Working Group indicates that the Baker-Nunn satellite tracking camera has excellent performance although it is not certain that this performance is superior to similar cameras which the Soviets might have since Soviet optical capabilities are such that they could design an instrument with comparable characteristics. The design details of the Baker-Nunn camera are available in the unclassified literature and the only aspect of the camera which might be considered unique is the method used in grinding and polishing the optical glass which is a proprietary secret.

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b. The Working Group concludes that there would be relatively little intelligence or technical gain to the Soviets if the Baker-Munn camera were to be made available to them. On the other hand, the Working Group feels strongly that the camera should not be made available to the Soviets either by sale or gift without every effort being made to utilize the transaction as a means of obtaining data and information useful to the US. This might be accomplished through several possible methods of which the following are examples: 1) the Baker-Munn camera might be exchanged for a similar Soviet instrument; 2) the Baker-Munn camera might be made available to the Soviets on condition that a qualified U.S. technician set it up on its intended tracking position. This technician might thereby have an opportunity of collecting useful intelligence data; 3) the camera might be made available to the Soviets on condition that pictures taken by it would be made available to the U.S.; 4) making the camera available to the Soviets might provide an occasion for proposing to the Soviets a joint program for the reduction of the data obtained by optical means in both the US and USSR.

c. It is suggested that the forthcoming CSAGI meeting may provide an opportunity to explore the above or other possible methods by which the US might obtain useful data in return for making one or more cameras available to the Soviets. In any case, no camera should be permitted to come into the possession of the Soviets until all possibilities for obtaining data or equipment useful to the US have been explored.

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2. [REDACTED] pointed out that instances had arisen in which Latin American observatories had been requested by the Soviets to report their observations of the Soviet Sputniks. This effort on the part of the Soviets to obtain data from Latin American observatories might be a reflection of the inadequate coverage of Sputniks in the Southern Hemisphere. Opportunities might arise in which US guidance could be given to these Latin American observatories in replying to the Soviet requests. It might be possible on these occasions to make the supplying of data to the Soviets contingent upon receipt of Soviet data which might be of interest to the U.S. The Working Group felt that it would be useful whenever possible to urge Latin American observatories who receive such requests from the USSR to make any compliance with the request contingent upon the Soviets furnishing useful raw data.

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3. [REDACTED] directed attention to the limited time remaining for preparing and serving requirements upon members of the US delegation to the CSAGI meeting. He also pointed out the fact that members of the delegation would be visiting institutions within the

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SUBJECT: Sale of 10 Baker-Nunn Satellite Tracking Cameras
to the Soviet International Geophysical Year
Committee

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been handled in the past in company with OSR representative: [redacted] et al) as Comarose apparently has no one sufficiently versed in photo technology to help them make judgments on the applications for licenses to ship cameras to the Soviet Union. It is my opinion that the Baker-Nunn Satellite Tracking Camera represents an important U.S. development in this field and that we might want to deny its use by the Soviets. It would also appear that estimates of Soviet capabilities versus U.S. capabilities could profitably use this information.

4. Course of Action:

- a. Armed with recommendations from OSI and OSR, I could supplement my technical evaluation of the Baker-Nunn Satellite Tracking Camera and present argumentation to Mr. Wells for denying the license application.
- b. Supplied with an alternate suggestion, for example from OSI, I could conclude my technical evaluation with a recommendation that the cameras be licensed but under the condition that appropriate U.S. "technicians" accompany a few pilot models to points of utilization to supervise erection and provide guidance on methods of operation to meet Soviet requirements.

5. Conclusion:

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To assist in arriving at our position in this matter I am sending separate copies of this memorandum to OSI, OSR, OSR [redacted] and the SA/WD/DCI. I will record the technical details of the Baker-Nunn Satellite Tracking Camera and my views thereon until advised as to their proper disposition.

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[redacted]
Chief, Photo Intelligence Division, OSR